



Paradigm Shift: Being an OLA Teacher

In this section you will find:

An OLA Teacher is...

Know Yourself

Know Your Students (Student-Lens)

Know Your School Culture and Community (Teacher-Lens)

Class Culture Diagram

The Goals of OLA



Paradigm Shift: An OLA Teacher...

- Is comfortable with ambiguity.
- Believes that students can learn in a 100% L2 environment.
- Allows language to develop naturally.
- Understands that it takes time to create culture and community in the classroom.
- Knows that by creating a safe, fun and engaging environment, progress WILL happen.
- Knows that students are motivated because they feel (and are) successful.
- Knows the ACTFL proficiency guidelines, how to recognize them in his or her students, and how to apply them to the OLA teaching methodology.
- Knows how to push his or her students to learn new language skills appropriate for their language level.
- Is not simply an imparter of knowledge, but more importantly, a facilitator of acquisition.
- Focuses on creating an environment that stimulates successful language learning.
- Knows how to set-up a 100% L2 (target language) environment.
- Is a warm demander- firm yet positive.
- Believes that student ownership of language is a vital component of language acquisition.



- Understands the importance of connecting language to student's lives.
- Uses language to unify students and the community as a whole.
- Know that projects and assignments are not copied rotely.
- Knows the skills the students need to exhibit to function (i.e.- act, draw, circumlocute, patience, the ability to infer, etc.)
- Knows that the focus of language acquisition is on proficiency and what the students CAN do.
- Understands that this is a TOTAL CLASSROOM AND CONTROL SHIFT.
- Knows that his or her students' behaviors are a symptom of something.
- Knows that personal becomes communal- creations are best when shared.
- Recognizes it takes a long time to truly acquire a language



Know Yourself

As a Person

- What is important to you?
- What are you passionate about?
- When do you feel the most creative?
- When do you feel inspired?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?

As an Educator

- Why do you want to teach?
- What do you want your students to learn from you?
- What do you want your students to be able to do?
- How important is student engagement to you?
- What do you believe the purpose of assessment is?

As a Language Teacher

- How important is an L2 (target language) environment to you?
- How important is grammar to you?
- Do you believe language can work itself out?
- How will you measure what your students are actually learning?
- What do you know/believe about second language acquisition?
- Have you ever studied abroad?
- What are your personal experiences with language learning?
- How comfortable are you in the L2 (target language)?



Know Your Students

Your students are the curriculum. You need to find out who your students are and take a look at their world through a student lens to truly understand how to relate to them.

The Student

What are their interests?
Who is in their life?
How do they spend their free time?
What are their dreams?
What are their passions?
What is their family like? Their friends?
What are their talents?

The Classroom Community

What does each student have to offer to the community?
How are they going to trust each other? Trust you?
How are you going to set-up and demand a community of trust, decency and communal learning?
Are your students and their work “visible” in your classroom?

The School

Who is your student population?
What events or happenings are going on at school?
What are the values of the school?

The Community

What is going on in the community outside of school?
What kinds of stories/articles/news can they relate to?
What can they bring in to contribute to the community?



Know Your School Culture and Community

Educating yourself about these issues will help you better connect with and know your students.

Student Culture Issues

What issues are you students dealing with at school?

- Cliques
- Personalities
- Strengths
- Weaknesses

Institutional Norms

What issues are your colleagues and the school as a whole dealing with?

How are these issues dealt with?

What are the beliefs about education at your school?

How do you interact with other teachers at the school?

Community

Who is your community?

What issues is the community dealing with?

What needs do they have?

How do these needs affect your students and your school?

Can your students have an impact on the community somehow?

Global Society

What events are happening in the world that impact your students?

That your students can relate to?

How does a comparison of the L1 and L2 cultures in your classroom influence language acquisition? How are these cultures a part of it?

Culture

School Culture

Personality of
students

Teacher
personality



The Goals of OLA

1. To speak the second language (L2)
2. Not be afraid of an L2 environment
3. Take risks / break down filter
4. To be able to infer & circumlocute
5. Participate and be part of a community
6. *Self motivated / ownership*

